

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for automatically associating a digital image with data indicative of a person, the method comprising:

creating the digital image;

5 transferring the digital image to a first computer;

automatically associating data indicative of at least one person with the image; and

saving the digital image and the data indicative of the person.

10 2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising transferring the digital image to a second computer for later retrieval by the at least one person.

15 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the digital image created is selected from the group consisting of a still image, a motion picture image, and an image with sound.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising e-mailing the digital image to the person.

20 5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising adding at least one feature to the digital image, the feature selected from the group consisting of a watermark, a signature, a greeting, a phrase, a logo, an internet URL, and a background.

25 6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising compressing the digital image.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of saving the digital image is accomplished by validating a unique file name for the digital image.

30 8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of saving the digital image is accomplished with a double-validation step.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of automatically associating data indicative of at least one person with the image is accomplishing by creating or entering a unique identifier for the at least one person.

5 10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the unique identifier is entered by one of scanning a barcode, scanning optical characters, reading a card, and scanning an RFID tag.

10 11. The method of Claim 10, further comprising validating the barcode, information from the card, optical characters, or RFID tag.

15 12. The method of Claim 2, wherein the step of transferring the digital image to a second computer is accomplished by transferring at least one digital image file and a database file.

 13. The method of Claim 13, wherein the step of transferring the digital image to a second computer is accomplished by a validation step.

20 14. The method of Claim 1, wherein a plurality of digital images are created, transferred, automatically associated with data indicative of at least one person in the image, and saved with the data indicative of at least one person for each image, and further comprising recording information about the digital images taken.

25 15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the information recorded is selected from the group consisting of an elapsed time for taking the digital images, whether an image is marked as “favorite,” a response to a consumer survey question, an indication whether information was provided by a person, an indication whether consent for the image was given, an indication whether parental consent was
30 given, an indication whether an image file includes motion, an indication whether

an image file includes sound, and an indication whether an image file includes an annotation.

5 16. The method of Claim 14, further comprising counting and displaying a total for at least one category of information recorded.

10 17. The method of Claim 1, wherein a plurality of digital images are associated with data indicative of a single person and saved with the data indicative of the person.

18. The method of Claim 1, wherein a single image is associated with data indicative of at least two persons and is saved with data indicative of each person.

15 19. The method of Claim 2, further comprising processing the data by the second computer.

20 20. The method of Claim 2, further comprising processing the data by the second computer, wherein image files from the first computer are stored and locations of the image files are recorded, and database files containing data indicative of the at least one person from the first computer are stored separately from the image files.

25 21. The method of Claim 20, wherein metric files are updated by the database files from the first computer.

30 22. The method of Claim 20, wherein the metric files are selected from the group consisting of an image count, an elapsed time for taking the digital images, a count of whether an image is marked as “favorite,” a count of responses to a consumer survey question, a count of indications whether information was provided by a person, a count of indications whether consent for the image was given, a count of indications whether parental consent was given, a count of

indications whether an image file includes motion, a count of indications whether an image file includes sound, and a count of indications whether an image file includes an annotation.

5 23. The method of Claim 2, further comprising preparing at least one question for response by a person retrieving the digital image.

10 24. The method of Claim 2, further comprising receiving a response from the person retrieving the digital image and providing sales or promotional information to the person in response to an answer to the at least one question.

15 25. A method for automatically associating a digital image with data indicative of a person, the method comprising:
 creating a digital image;
 transferring the digital image to a first computer;
 scanning a unique identifier for a person into the first computer;
 automatically associating the unique identifier with the digital image;
 saving the digital image and the unique identifier; and
 transferring the digital image to a second computer for later retrieval by the
20 person.

25 26. The method of Claim 25, wherein the step of scanning the unique identifier is accomplished by one of scanning a barcode, reading an OCR pattern, reading a magnetic data card, and scanning an RFID tag.

30 27. The method of Claim 25, wherein at least one of the steps of creating the digital image, transferring the digital image to the first computer, scanning the unique identifier, saving the digital image, and transferring the digital image to the second computer, is accompanied by a validation process.

28. The method of Claim 25, further comprising compressing the digital image before the step of transferring the digital image to the second computer.

5 29. The method of Claim 25, further comprising recording information concerning a plurality of digital images, and counting and displaying a result for at least one category of information recorded.

10 30. The method of Claim 29, wherein the information is selected from the group consisting of an image count, an elapsed time for taking the digital images, a count of whether an image is marked as "favorite," a count of responses to a consumer survey question, a count of indications whether information was provided by a person, a count of indications whether consent for the image was given, a count of indications whether parental consent was given, a count of indications whether an image file includes motion, a count of indications whether an image file includes sound, and a count of indications whether an image file includes an annotation.

15 31. The method of Claim 25, further comprising e-mailing the digital image to the person.

20 32. The method of Claim 25, wherein the second computer stores the digital image and stores separately a database file containing information about the image.

25 33. The method of Claim 25, further comprising adding at least one feature to the digital image, the feature selected from the group consisting of a watermark, a signature, a greeting, a phrase, a logo, an internet URL, and a background.

30 34. The method of Claim 25, further comprising preparing at least one question for response by a person retrieving the digital image.

35. The method of Claim 34, further comprising receiving a response from the person retrieving the digital image and providing sales or promotional information to the person in response to an answer to the at least one question.

5 36. A system for automatically associating a digital image with data indicative of a person, the system comprising:

 a first computer;

 a digital camera operably connected to the first computer;

 a detector operably connected to the first computer; and

10 a computer program accessible to the computer for automatically associating the digital image taken by the camera with data indicative of the person.

15 37. The system of Claim 36, further comprising a second computer accessible to the first computer.

20 38. The system of Claim 37, wherein the second computer is accessible to the first computer through the Internet and the second computer is also accessible to the person through the Internet.

25 39. The system of Claim 36, wherein the detector is selected from the group consisting of a barcode scanner, a card reader, an RF antenna, and an OCR reader.

30 40. The system of Claim 36, wherein the first computer is selected from the group consisting of a pen tablet, a microprocessor, and a wireless mobile computer.

35 41. The system of Claim 36, wherein the digital camera is selected from the group consisting of a still camera, a video camera, and a charge-coupled device.

42. The system of Claim 36, further comprising a modem, an antenna connected to the modem and a second computer accessible through the modem.

43. The system of Claim 36, further comprising an interface card for at least one accessory for the first computer.

44. The system of Claim 36, further comprising a signature pad operably connected to the first computer.

45. The system of Claim 37, wherein the second computer is selected from the group consisting of a computer associated with a telephone, a personal digital assistant, a wireless handheld device, and a wireless computer.

46. A system for automatically associating a digital image with data indicative of a person, the system comprising:

a first computer having a memory;

a digital camera operably connected to the first computer;

a barcode scanner operably connected to the first computer; and

a computer program residing in the memory of the first computer that automatically associates data from the barcode scanner indicative of the person with the digital image taken by the camera.

47. The system of Claim 46, further comprising a second computer accessible through the Internet to the first computer.

48. The system of Claim 46, further comprising a modem and an antenna connected to the first computer.

49. The system of Claim 46, further comprising a software program for compression residing in the memory of the first computer.

50. The system of Claim 47, further comprising a file storing at least one of watermarks, logos, backgrounds, annotations, greetings, and features, the file residing in a memory accessible to the first computer or the second computer.